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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews 1993 trends and issues in urban education in five sections. Following an introduction, the first section describes the economic conditions of today's diverse urban public school students and the way that poverty differentially affects various ethnic and racial student groups. A second section analyzes key educational policies affecting urban students: school choice, desegregation, magnet schools, and school finance. A third section reviews a variety of special programs for students disadvantaged by poverty, minority status, and/or disability. A fourth section reviews a group of linked practices that are in the midst of turmoil and change because they all seek to handle the growing diversity among students in a new way. This section covers testing and tracking, instructional practices for heterogeneous groups of students; student learning styles; and three popular models for school restructuring: Accelerated Schools, the School Development Program, and Success for All. A final section looks at the role of parents in educational reform. An author biography is included. (Contains 187 references.) (JB)

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CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN URBAN EDUCATION, 1993

Carol Ascher and Gary Burnett
Teachers College, Columbia University

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CURRENT TRENDS AND ISSUES IN URBAN EDUCATION

INTRODUCTION

Today, particularly in our nation's cities, American students present "a new order of pluralism" with their overwhelming range of backgrounds, languages, gifts, and needs (Hodgkinson, 1988; p. 14). And this growing pluralism is not likely to come to a halt in the near future. Severe and long-term poverty is likely to continue afflicting urban students. Also, the diversity of their language backgrounds will continue to increase. In Los Angeles and San Francisco, approximately 30 percent of public school students are Limited English Proficient, while in Albuquerque the number is nearly 43 percent (Donato & Garcia, 1992). Homelessness, teenage pregnancy, female-headed households, drug abuse–these, too, have become part of the imagery of today's "diverse" students.

To ground this 1993 review of trends and issues in urban education, we begin by describing the economic conditions of today's diverse public school students, particularly those in urban areas, and the way that poverty differentially affects various ethnic and racial student groups. We then analyze differences in their educational performance, with the understanding that any data on how well a group of students is learning are also in part a function of the measuring instruments and in part a description of how successfully the school is teaching them.

A second section analyzes key educational policies, both old and new, affecting urban students: school choice, desegregation, including magnet schools, and school finance. While a plethora of issues could be treated, both here and in the remaining sections we have followed the concerns made prominent by large numbers of researchers who have

consistently examined urban schools, including the changes they have undergone, over the past decade.

In a third section, we review a variety of special programs for students disadvantaged by poverty, minority status, and/or disability. Created on the assumption that public schools are adequate for the majority of students, but that disadvantaged students need "something extra" (Hill & McDonnell, 1992), such programs include Head Start, Chapter 1, bilingual education, and dropout prevention programs.

Finally, a fourth section reviews a group of linked practices which are in the midst of turmoil and change because they all seek to handle the growing diversity among students in a new way. We begin with testing and tracking, and move on to an analysis of three popular models for school restructuring: Accelerated Schools, the School Development Program, and Success for All. Instructional practices for heterogeneous groups of students, and the issue of student learning styles complete our review of pedagogical changes occurring in behalf of diverse students. Finally, we look at the role of parents in educational reform. These are not practices or programs for "special needs" students, like those described in the third section, but are basic reforms for creating school-wide changes to transform education for all students.

Because any racial or ethnic term is a social designation as well as a term of self-identification, we follow the current preferences of most groups in designating the name of their group. We therefore use the terms *African Americans*, *Hispanic Americans*, and *Asian Americans* when we are speaking of any of these groups in isolation, although when we compare African Americans with whites, we often use the more common Bureau of Census designation, *black* and *white*. When treating Bureau of Census data, we also use the term *Asian/Pacific Islander*, although it likely includes the same peoples as those designated by the more common designation,

Asian Americans. To designate the comprehensive group of students who are not white, we avoid the negative term, nonwhite, preferring to use *minority*. Although "minority" students are rapidly becoming much more than a numerical minority in the United States, the word *minority* still applies because their lower power and status in the society.

Today's Urban Students

Ethnicity

For much of the nearly 40 years since *Brown v. Board of Education*, the critical questions asked about the educational opportunities offered by any school system have centered on race. Since residential segregation remains a fundamental feature of American life, this concern for equal educational opportunity has translated into questions about whether African American students were enrolled in segregated schools, or whether they attended the same schools as white students.

Yet during the last decade, our national ambivalence about solving problems caused by racial differences has become complicated and obscured by the arrival of eight million immigrants from Europe, Africa, South America and Asia, bringing two million students whose native language is something other than English into the nation's schools. In fact, today the 20 million foreign-born people living in the United States constitute eight percent of the total population (Schmidt, 1992), or just a slightly smaller percentage than the African American population.

With the arrival of millions of new immigrants, 80 percent of whom are from the many and varied countries comprising Latin America, Asia, and the Pacific Islands, black and white Americans now comprise a smaller share of the nation's population. While blacks and whites together

accounted for nearly 95 percent of the population in the 1980 census, by 1990 these two groups had shrunk dramatically, to only 86 percent of the population (Hacker, 1992). In the same period, the Asian/Pacific Islander population increased by 108 percent, and the Hispanic population, which also has extremely high levels of immigration, increased by 53 percent. Although whites (not of Hispanic origin) increased slightly between 1980 and 1990, from 180.3 million to 188.1 million, this group dropped from 80 percent to 75.6 percent of the population (Bureau of the Census, 1991). In this last census, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and Hawaiians–the nation's fastest growing groups–outnumbered African Americans (Hacker, 1992).

America's new immigrants are young and often have large families. While whites now average 1.7 children in a lifetime, Mexican Americans average 2.9 children, and Cambodians and Hmong average 7.4 and 11.9 children, respectively (Kellogg, 1988). Thus, an even more noticeable student population change has occurred within the public schools. First, as with their families, the new immigrant students are highly concentrated. Over three-fourths of all immigrant students attend schools in just five states: Florida, Texas, California, New York, and Illinois (Hill & McDonnell, 1992). Immigrants are also highly concentrated in urban areas. For example, 94 percent of all Asian/Pacific Islanders lived in metropolitan areas in 1991, and the percentage was even higher among recent immigrants (Bureau of Census, 1992).

The large numbers of immigrant students have changed the image of American schools from being African American and white to being centers of many colors, cultures, and languages. While non-Hispanic white students constituted 76 percent of all public school students as late as 1976, by 1986, they comprised just over 70 percent. At the same time, African American students had increased from 15.5 percent to 16.1 percent, Hispanics from 6.4 percent to almost 10 percent, and Asians from

1.2 to 2.8 percent of all students. Despite the continuing small numbers of Hispanics and Asians relative to whites, the increase was almost 45 percent for Hispanics and 116 percent for Asians in just ten years (Ogle, Alsalam, & Rogers, 1991). By the turn of the century, 75 percent of all Asians between 3 and 24 years old living in this country will be immigrants or children of immigrants who arrived after 1980 (Ima, 1991).

Nevertheless, racism—the sense of America as a tense and divided society, with blacks and whites as the prototypic unequal partners—remains real both inside and outside schools. Residential segregation and other structures of inequality create a grid of black and white. In schools, as in the rest of the society, the differences between the opportunities offered to black and white students have become both a prototype for and a symbol of inequality, and continue to stimulate studies of the education system that examine the differences in access and achievement for white, black, and other students (Cibulka, 1992).

Poverty in America

By the late 1980s, the income gap between families with the highest and lowest incomes had become wider than in any year since 1947 (Reed & Sautter, 1990). While the poorest 20 percent of all families dropped to less than 5 percent of the national income, the wealthiest 20 percent of all families increased from 44 percent in 1980 to 47 percent in 1989—the largest share of the national income ever recorded (Reed & Sautter, 1990; Waldrop & Exter, 1991).

Currently, the American lower class constitutes 42 percent of the population, up from 31 percent in 1969 ("Census Data...," 1992). Moreover, the United States now has the highest rate of poverty among industrialized nations. By the fall of 1992, even after discounting the growing numbers of homeless people, poverty had risen sharply over the past two years,

increasing by 4.2 million to a total of 35.7 million, or 14.2 percent of the population. Not surprisingly, rates of poverty varied by ethnic groups. For white Americans, the poverty rate rose to 11.3 percent last year, up from 10.7 percent in 1990; for African Americans, the poverty rate rose to 32.7 percent last year, up from 31.9 percent in 1990; for Hispanic Americans, it rose from 28.1 percent in 1990 to 28.7 percent in 1991; and for Asian Americans, the poverty rate rose to 13.8 percent last year, up from 12.2 percent in 1990 (Pear, 1992). In fact, the generally low rate of poverty among Asian families should not obscure extremely high poverty among some Asian groups: for example, over a third of all Vietnamese families, and 90 percent of all Hmong families are poor (Bureau of Census, 1992; Ima, 1991).

Of all age groups, children have been most affected by poverty. The rate of poverty for children under 18 has been climbing steadily, reaching 19.6 percent in 1989, 20.5 percent in 1990, and 21.8 percent in 1991 (Pear, 1992). In fact, since 1975, children have been poorer than any other age group. To put it another way, a child is six times likelier to be poor than an elderly person (Hodgkinson, 1988). By 1989, children accounted for nearly 40 percent of America's poor. In the 1980s, while the number of American billionaires quintupled, the number of poor children jumped by 23 percent (Reed & Sautter, 1990). Again, while most poor children are white, the highest *percentage* of poor children is black (Hodgkinson, 1988).

The connection between childhood poverty and family circumstance is by now well-documented. Children living in a family headed by a person under 15 have nearly a fifty-fifty chance of being poor, and children living in a family headed by a woman have a greater than fifty percent chance of being poor. African American and Hispanic children in families headed by women are even more likely to be poor: 56 percent of families headed by single black women are poor, while 59 percent of

families headed by single Hispanic women are poor (Reed & Sautter, 1990). While the median earnings of Asian/Pacific Islander families were higher than those of whites, this is in large part because 63 percent of them had two or more incomes and 19 percent had three or more incomes. Among single, female-headed Asian/Pacific Island households, 22 percent were poor (Bureau of the Census, 1992; Ima, 1991).

Not surprisingly, poverty and living in a single-parent household increase the likelihood of both living in substandard housing and homelessness. While households with incomes below the poverty level have increased, the stock of low-rental housing units has decreased. By 1989, there were eight million low-income renters competing for four million housing units–and the discrepancy has continued to grow, pushing up the price of low-income rentals. Moreover, at the end of the 1980s single parents paid 58 percent of their incomes in rent, and young single parents with children living with them paid 81 percent of their income in rent. When housing eats up such a large percentage of the family income, a single disaster–from illness to car breakdown–can suddenly send the family out onto the street. It is not surprising, then, that families comprise over half of the homeless population, and that most homeless families are headed by women with two or three children under the age of five (Hodgkinson, 1989).

Finally, the educational attainment of parents is a critical determinant in the likelihood of a child's being poor. Although education has a differential impact, depending on race, the poverty rate among married-couple families headed by high school dropouts is between two and three times the poverty rate of families headed by a high school graduate. Poverty among female-headed households–always higher than among married-couple families–is further aggravated when the household head is a high school dropout. Among white families headed by someone under 25 with a high school diploma, the poverty rate is just under 60

percent, but it rises to nearly 85 percent among those families headed by a dropout under 25. Among female-headed black families, while almost 70 percent of those headed by a high school graduate under 25 are poor, this percentage increases to 93 percent among those families headed by a high school dropout (Children's Defense Fund, 1991).

Poverty and Social Isolation of Inner-City Children

Poverty among children is particularly extreme in a number of American cities. Child poverty rates rose in 84 of the 100 largest cities in the 1980s, from 24.8 percent in 1979 to 28 percent in 1989. In fact, in a number of large cities the child poverty rate far exceeds these percentages, rising to over 40 percent: Detroit (46.6 percent), Laredo, Texas (46.4 percent), New Orleans (46.3 percent), Flint, (44.6 percent), Miami (44.1 percent), Hartford (43.4 percent), Gary, (43.0 percent), Cleveland (43.0 percent), Atlanta (42.9 percent), and Dayton (40.9 percent) (Children's Defense Fund, 1992).

Although there are no national data on the social isolation of poor and minority children, Wilson's classic study of Chicago, *The Truly Disadvantaged* (1987), has spawned a number of studies of other cities which generally corroborates his hypothesis about the increasing concentration of inner-city poverty and the growing isolation of poor, inner-city blacks from middle-class role models and institutions (see, for example, Massey & Eggers, 1990). However, while Wilson argued for the declining importance of race, several studies suggest that, because of the "skewed" class distribution of African Americans, race continues to be critical in determining the environment of black children. For example, analyses by Massey (1992) suggest that racial segregation has shaped, and to a large extent determined, the socioeconomic environment experienced by poor minority families, creating persistent concentrations of poverty among blacks in American cities. Massey also shows how racial segregation

"undermines the socioeconomic environment faced by poor blacks and leaves their communities extremely vulnerable to any downturn in the economy." He argues that there is a "dynamic feedback relationship between segregation, black socioeconomic status, and discrimination, whereby rising segregation increased black-white occupational differences" (p. 2). The fall in black socioeconomic status in turn raises the level of discrimination in the housing market, which increases the level of black-white segregation.

Poverty, Race/Ethnicity, and Achievement

How does poverty affect students' chances for school success? For more than two decades, *Equal Educational Opportunity* by James Coleman and his associates (Coleman, Campbell, Hobson, McPartland, Moody, Weinfeld, & York, 1966) has been the keystone of educational debate in its suggestion that the social class of parents is so important to achievement that the schools are relatively helpless to affect the fate of low-income students.

Corroborating Coleman's findings are dramatic data from the First International Mathematics Study, which compared math scores of school children in the US with those of other industrialized nations, such as Germany, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Although the international data on poverty were sparse, virtually all the variation in mean test scores could be predicted by the poverty rates of children in the various countries. Moreover, 60 percent of that variation was predicted by the poverty rate among children in single-parent households—and the US far surpassed all other nations in the poverty rate of children living with single parents (Jaeger, 1992).

Poverty in the United States affects some groups of students more severely than it does others, largely because of the number of years they

spend in poverty and the concentration of poverty around them. Analyses of two 1980s databases–one drawn from Chapter 1 students; the other, the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics–shed important light on the severity of the students' poverty conditions, both in terms of the longevity of their poverty and the concentration of poverty in their environment. The analyses show a clear association between the length of time students–black or white–are poor and the likelihood that they will be behind their expected grade level (Orland, 1990).

It is important to recognize that, even after controlling for other factors, such as gender or mother's educational level, the length of time a student experiences poverty is statistically associated with falling behind in grade level. Further, race affects how long a child is likely to spend in poverty. While the black children sampled in Orland's study were poor for an average of 5.4 of their first 15 years, nonblack children were poor for an average of less than a year. Roughly one in four black children were poor for ten years or more, while only one in 200 white children were poor for a comparable period. Thus, while white students may be more affected than black students by equal amounts of poverty, black students tend to experience longer poverty and to live in areas with higher concentrations of poverty.

Hispanic and Asian students are not included in these data, but research conducted as part of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 suggests a similar confluence of poverty and ethnicity or race in constraining achievement. While 37 percent of low SES Hispanic eighth graders failed to achieve basic reading skills, only 19 percent of their high SES peers similarly failed. Among Asians, 38 percent of the low SES eighth graders failed to achieve basic reading skills, compared to 12 percent of the high SES students. In fact, these class differences appear more powerful than language proficiency in determining reading scores. Moreover, Asian language minority students with high English proficiency

had a lower failure rate than Hispanic students with high English proficiency, suggesting that ethnic and cultural differences independently influence social class and language proficiency in creating students' achievement (National Center for Education Statistics, 1992).

Coleman and his associates (1966) found that the peers with whom a student attended school were more important to achievement than any other school site characteristic. Poor minority students surrounded by other students from the same background had significantly less chance of success than those who had white and middle-class peers. In the late 1960s, as the country began to take seriously its campaign to desegregate school districts, this finding was used to point to the importance of racial balance. In the 1980s and 1990s, while findings remain much the same, the focus has shifted from race to poverty. Most importantly, new data show that students in schools with high rates of poverty have lower achievement than those in schools with lower poverty concentrations, and the association between school poverty and student achievement is especially strong in the nation's highest poverty schools (Orland, 1990). In fact, as Orland argues, "a nonpoor student in a poor school is actually *more* likely to be a low achiever (36.0 percent) than is a poor student in a low poverty school (27.6 percent)" (p. 53).

Recent research also suggests that poverty and race create more intense disadvantage in urban than in suburban or rural settings. For example, even when poor students in inner-city, suburban, and rural areas are compared, the urban students are likely to be much more disadvantaged than their suburban or rural peers. First, eight out of ten inner-city eighth graders in 1988 were minorities. By contrast, in advantaged rural and suburban schools, eight out of ten eighth graders were white. Only in disadvantaged suburban areas were there high concentrations of minority students, the majority being Hispanics. In fact, disadvantaged schools (including urban, suburban, and rural) enrolled 49

percent of all Hispanic students, 40 percent of native American students, 36 percent of African American students, and just 7 percent of all white students (Peng, Wang, & Walberg, 1992).

Inner-city schools also have relatively low numbers of students who live with both natural parents--44 percent, compared to 60 percent in other communities. About a third live with their mother only, twice as many as in other communities. Parents in inner-cities also have lower educational levels than those in advantaged communities, although their educational levels are higher than in disadvantaged suburban communities. Since unemployment is the highest in inner-cities, and inner-city family income is the lowest of all groups, the return on education for disadvantaged urban dwellers is lower than in the suburbs (Peng, Wang, & Walberg, 1992).

Disadvantaged inner-city schools also have high proportions of students who need special services. Homelessness, so prevalent in large cities, is linked to lowered school attendance and serious developmental delays (Hodgkinson, 1989). About a quarter of the students in inner-city schools also come from families whose native language is not English (Peng et al., 1992).

In fact, although the number of Hispanic and Asian/Pacific Island students has grown enormously in the last decade, the number of these students who are language minority has grown even faster. This vast increase in numbers of language minority students in the 1980s has put a great strain on public school budgets in states like California and Texas, and particularly in some urban school districts. As the chart below shows, students needing "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) services was as high as 42.6 percent in one urban district, and fell between 15 percent and a third in several others (Donato & Garcia, 1992, p. 97).

Percentage LEP Students During 1988-1989

DISTRICT	Percentage
Los Angeles Unified School District	31.0
San Francisco Unified School District	28.7
San Diego Unified School District	16.3
Denver Public Schools	16.9
Houston Independent School District	15.5
Albuquerque Unified School District	42.6
Chicago Public Schools	8.9

Despite the power of poverty and race to curtail achievement, the narrowing educational lag of black and Hispanic students with white students during the 1980s, at a time when the poverty rates of the latter increased, suggests that the relationship between poverty and achievement is not simple, and that there is much that even under-resourced schools can do. National Assessment of Educational Progress data show that between 1980 and 1988, there was substantial progress in narrowing the gap between minority and white students–and particularly between whites and blacks in reading, mathematics, and science. Further, the fact that the gap in the number of high school diplomas awarded was eliminated between black and white students, while the percentage of graduates who entered college widened, makes clear how economics influences college going, but not public school achievement (Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center, 1990).

The confluence of background poverty and poorly resourced schools makes the power of schooling particularly hard to isolate. The trouble is that African American and Hispanic students, many of whom

live in the inner-cities, are more likely than white students to attend high poverty or under-resourced schools (Orland, 1990).[1] While some of the difference in achievement may be the result of different families enrolling in high and low poverty schools, the association between poverty and school resources remains even when family characteristics are controlled. That is, school-based achievement differences reflect not only factors such as the poverty and race of students, but "fundamental inequities between districts serving predominantly poor and minority students and districts serving more affluent and more largely majority students" (Orland, 1990, p. 75). Thus, where students live affects the probability of being undereducated (Waggoner, 1991). At the same time, students who live in long-term poverty are also likely to attend high poverty schools. That is, they may be doubly afflicted, by "both types of intense poverty experiences" (Orland, 1990).

The Effects of School Policies on Achievement and Equality

In the past decade there have been important shifts in several key education policy areas. While there has been a national retreat from desegregation, magnet schools, which opened in the 1970s as a voluntary desegregation strategy, became a prototype of "choice" plans around the country in the 1980s. And, in the same years that choice advocates have begun calling for deregulation and even privatization, school finance battles in cities around the country have made news as they have attempted to equalize resources between rich and poor districts through regulation.

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[1] Unfortunately, similar data are lacking for Asian students. Although the image of Asians is that they are a "model minority," able to succeed under any and all circumstances, the fact is that many attend under-resourced, economically segregated schools, and that a similar confluence between family poverty and school effects is likely among Asians.

In the following sections, we review in more detail recent trends and issues in desegregation, magnet schools, choice plans, and school finance. We focus on how these various policies have affected the educational opportunities of urban students, and particularly those students who are already battling the adverse effects of poverty or race.

Desegregation

Since the mid 1980s, several Federal level decisions and policies have effectively restructured legal recourses for school desegregation. Most conspicuous, the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice began efforts to end busing in Norfolk, Savannah, Oklahoma City, Seattle, and elsewhere (National Research Council, 1989). In addition, in January 1991, in a pivotal desegregation case, *Oklahoma City v. Doyle*, the Supreme Court ruled that formerly segregated school districts may be released from court-ordered busing once they have taken all "practicable" steps to eliminate the legacy of segregation. According to the Court, local segregated housing patterns are not necessarily the responsibility of school districts, as long as these patterns are the result of private choices and are not themselves "vestiges" of the era of official school segregation (Greenhouse, 1991).

Research reflected the shift in national policies. After receiving a great deal of attention in the 1960s and 1970s, school desegregation research slowed down noticeably in the 1980s, as researchers turned to the study of magnet schools and effective schooling (Grant, 1988; Noblit & Dempsey, 1992). Not surprisingly, the picture provided by the rare researcher studying desegregation has not been very optimistic. For example, two of the few recent desegregation studies report increased isolation of blacks in southern districts (Orfield, Monfort, & Aaron, 1989), and national social trends that "seem to augur sharp increases in resegregation" (Taeuber, Smock, & Taeuber, 1990, p. 28). Moreover,

segregation appears to be worse for Hispanic than African American students. In 1986, more than 70 percent of Hispanic students, compared to 64 percent of blacks, were enrolled in schools that were more than 50 percent minority; almost a third of Hispanic students were in heavily segregated schools, that is more than 90 percent minority (Haycock & Duany, 1991). At the same time, schools that serve disadvantaged minority students have been described as underfunded (Council of Great City Schools, 1992), and African American and other minority students are found to encounter "discrimination, unfairness and abuse" in their schools (Ollie, 1989).

Research also suggests that resegregation has been affected by several aspects of a district's desegregation policy. For example, the probability of resegregation appears to be greater if a district underwent desegregation before 1976, if the change was rapid, and if the district did not desegregate as completely as possible (Taeuber et al., 1990). While "voluntary assignments" and other "choice" plans have been touted as a way of preventing white flight (Rossell, 1990), a recent analysis of 20 school districts suggests that the level of segregation in a district is most likely to be reduced, and a racial balance to be maintained, when command and control models are used (Fife, 1992).

A recent study of a court-ordered voluntary transfer plan in St. Louis (Wells, 1991) also suggests the limits of "choice" in creating desegregated schooling for black students. This research demonstrates that, given the choice to attend either segregated urban or predominantly white suburban schools, black urban parents do not necessarily chose a predominantly white school for their children, nor do they make "rational" choices based on what might be the best education, even when there is free transportation to suburban schools. Instead, while some parents and students may actively "choose" an all-black school, a sense of powerlessness and alienation may cause others to "choose not to choose" or even to

enroll their children in schools they believe to be inferior. Thus, only a small percentage of black families who could be involved in voluntary desegregation choose to be.

Does racial balance affect achievement, as the 1954 suit, *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*, claimed? Although new research specifically addressing this question does not exist, recent studies with other objectives provide important information. For example, an analysis of the performance of high school students in Dade County schools shows that students in predominantly white schools have the highest average test scores, and while those in predominantly black schools have the lowest (Portes & Gran, 1991). Moreover, both Hispanics and Asians perform more poorly in predominantly black schools than they do in schools that are predominantly white. That is, for all ethnic groups, "there is an invariable monotonic relationship—the greater the black student concentration, the lower the average test scores" (p. 4). On the other hand, dropout rates for all ethnic groups increase as the black and Hispanic student concentration decreases, with black and Hispanic dropout rates highest in schools with the lowest concentration of their respective groups. This suggests both that predominantly white schools may have higher standards, and that these standards may exist at the expense of retaining minority students. Perhaps most interesting—and offering support to the above discussion of school effects—the differences in test scores in the various Dade County schools are not caused only by differences in student ethnicity. Rather, even after controlling for individual ethnicity and other factors, differences persist at the school level. That is, as Portes and Gran (1991) argue, there is something about schools serving predominantly black (or predominantly white) students that contributes to student failure or success.

Recently, the great influx of immigrant children has brought into new focus the potential conflict between school desegregation and bilingual

education, as growing numbers of children whose native language is not English have had to be placed either in language-segregated environments or integrated into mainstream classes without the benefits of special language instruction. While some districts have sacrificed desegregation goals to give Hispanic and other children whose native language is not English a proper curriculum in their native language, others have made the sacrifice in favor of desegregation. In fact, Hispanic students are in increasingly segregated schools, but not because of bilingual education. As we have pointed out, in 1986, more than 70 percent of all Hispanic students were in schools that were 50 percent minority, and almost a third of all Hispanic students were in schools that were 90 percent minority (Haycock & Duany, 1991). Yet, in the mid-1980s some 68 percent of eighth grade and 82 percent of eleventh grade language minority students received neither bilingual nor English-as-a-Second-Language instruction (Valdivieso, 1986).

Magnet Schools

Because magnet schools have always had a double objective, to stimulate both school improvement and voluntary racial integration, research on magnets has focused on the fulfillment of these objectives. On the question of whether magnet schools are particularly good schools, two large studies (Blank, 1990; Dentler, 1990), both based on 1983 data, draw rather different conclusions. While Blank reports that 80 percent of the magnet schools he studied had student reading and math achievement scores above their district averages, Dentler concludes that magnets vary as much as non-magnets in their ability to deliver educational quality. A third study (Hill, Foster, & Gendler, 1990), which included magnet schools as well as Catholic and zoned public schools, argues that magnets and Catholic schools far exceed the zoned schools in graduation rates and SAT scores, as well as in the percentage of students completing college preparatory courses and taking the SAT test. Finally, a first-year analysis

of the effectiveness of New York City's career magnet schools (Crain, Heebner, & Si, 1992) suggests that magnet school students are less likely than their comprehensive school peers to drop out in the transition between middle school and high school, show a gain in reading scores, and earn more credits toward graduation.

Research also suggests that to achieve real integration, a city must go beyond monitoring enrollments at the school level. In Montclair, New Jersey, where racial balance was achieved through a magnet school plan that assured racial and gender balance at the classroom level, its middle and high school honors and advanced classes nevertheless remained segregated (Educational Testing Service, 1990). In New York City, where career magnet high schools experience a rare degree of "intellectual desegregation," this has been achieved only by a system in which students' school choices are then subjected to a lottery randomly selecting students according to reading scores (Crain, 1992).

It has been argued that magnets often do "cream" off good students at the expense of non-magnets–and thus contribute to isolation by achievement and economics, if not by race, in the remainder of the districts' schools. The problem of creaming has generally been tackled by studying admissions criteria. For example, Dentler (1990) found nearly two-thirds of the magnets in his study to be selective by some admissions criteria, although half of the magnets with the highest achievement were not selective; and Blank (1990) found that only 15 percent of his sample used such "highly selective" criteria as test scores. However, as it has often been pointed out, even when a magnet school has no admissions criteria, most of the students are selected: simply having to choose a magnet selects out those students who "choose not to choose," and only rarely does a lottery system (New York City is an exception) include students with failing grades or records of bad behavior.

Another related concern is whether magnets draw scarce resources away from other schools. While Mitchell, Russell, and Benson (1989) found the difference in operating and recurring costs between magnets and non-magnets to be "relatively small," McDonnell (1989) found that magnets cost from 10 to 12 percent more than zoned schools. However, it has been pointed out that the cost differentials decline as start-up costs are absorbed, and that some magnets provide quality education even when they face severe resource problems (Metz, 1986).

School Choice

A wide range of choice plans were created in the late 1980s and early 1990s around the country, transforming the debate from *whether* there should be choice in education to *how much* choice should be offered and under what conditions. How are students to be matched with schools? How much government regulation should be promulgated? Do special arrangements have to be made for choice to work for low-income students? Should choice exist only for public schools, or should it be extended to private schooling?

While there are those who argue that "choice policies do the most for–and are most urgently sought by–the least fortunate members of society" (Finn, 1990, p. 5-6), and that "choice is also a viable option for reducing segregation" (Rinehart & Lee, 1991, p. 20), others argue that when resources are scarce, middle-class parents are the most successful in obtaining them (Whealey, 1991), and that an unstated goal of some choice supporters may be to further dismantle desegregation (Folbre, 1992). Cibulka (1990) points out that, whether the arrangement is a magnet school or some other form of choice, any limitation in the supply of good schools also aggravates "already existing quality gradations among schools," and runs directly counter to equity goals (p. 51).

A report of The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1992), summarizes the current choice arguments. It notes that "critical policy decisions are being made based more on faith than on fact" (p. 9). Because there has been so little information on the emerging choice schools, most arguments both pro and con have been drawn from "suggestive research" on magnet schools and alternative schools, as well as on private schools, all of which offer diversity, though with varying degrees of choice or competition. For example, Chubb and Moe's (1990) influential work on the benefits of school choice is not based on actual choice programs, but on information from a national longitudinal survey which suggests that "a well-organized school can make a meaningful difference for student achievement, regardless of the ability and background of its students" (p. 129). Moreover, as Lee and Bryk (1992) have recently pointed out, the formidable data analyses conducted by Chubb and Moe contain both technical and conceptual problems, including a confusion between measures of student aptitude and achievement, a rescaling of estimated test scores that gives special advantage to students in small private and large suburban schools, and a melding of these two types of high-performing schools, although their organizational structures are obviously quite different.

So far, in addition to such "suggestive" research, most information on choice plans has been drawn from several sources: a voucher demonstration project in Alum Rock, California, where from 1972 to 1977 randomly selected parents were given tuition vouchers to spend at the district's elementary and middle minischools (Bridge & Blackman, 1978); the first year report on Milwaukee's parental choice program (Whitte, 1991); and the aforementioned Carnegie Report that drew its data from a variety of choice programs both in the United States and in Scotland (Carnegie Foundation, 1992; Willms & Echols, 1992).

The Alum Rock experiment produced no differences in academic performance between participants and the rest of the student population. In addition, analysis of issues surrounding choosing suggests that socially advantaged parents and better educated parents knew more about the voucher program than did less advantaged and more poorly educated parents. Similarly, in the Scottish experiment, parents who exercised their right to choose were "more highly educated and had more prestigious occupations." At the same time, parents chose schools that only "marginally benefitted" their children's examination attainment (Willms & Echols, 1992). On the other hand, Driscoll (1992), who compared 66 "choice" public schools with 66 randomly selected public schools, found no edge in the socioeconomic status or education of the parents in choice schools, but she also found no difference in achievement in the two types of schools, although students and parents in "choice" schools believed that the schools were doing a better job.

The Milwaukee program adds an interesting variation, because the plan focused specifically on low-income students. While no data compared the achievement of choice students with their peers who remained in the Milwaukee Public Schools, the researchers found variations in the quality of the private schools these students attended. (For example, one of the private schools had financial difficulties and closed mid-year, leaving its students abandoned.) Moreover, none of the schools were well equipped to meet the exceptional needs of learning disabled and emotionally disturbed students. Finally, of the 249 low-income students who entered the choice programs, 86 didn't enroll in the program the second year, preferring to return to public school. As with Alum Rock and the Scottish experiment, research on the Milwaukee program also investigated issues related to choosing. In Milwaukee, while there was a generally low level of information about the program among low-income families, those parents who did choose to enter the program had slightly higher education levels

and were more active in the schools than those who remained in the Milwaukee Public Schools.

Transportation is a key problem in a number of choice plans, since for most families in the United States the nearest school is two miles away, the next closest four-and-a-half miles, and the one beyond that between ten and 80 miles away (Carnegie Foundation, 1992). In Arkansas, students are required to pay their own transportation costs for inter-district transfers. In both Minnesota and Ohio, which also have inter-district plans, students are required to provide their own transportation to the borders of the new school system. In Minnesota, although low-income students can receive reimbursement for transportation costs, the money must still first be taken out of pocket. While the Carnegie report argues that a precondition for equity in any choice plan is full paid transportation costs, it also makes clear that subsidizing transportation in choice plans, even in small districts, adds millions to the cost of education.

Finally, there are a number of issues related to choice itself. First, there is evidence that students and their families choose schools based less on academic criteria than on other factors such as convenience (proximity to home, daycare, or parents' workplace) and a sense that other students are the kind of children they want to be with (Carnegie Foundation, 1992; Toch, 1992). Second, it has been suggested that the voluntary nature of many open enrollment programs can diminish their effectiveness, particularly for low-income students. When students must "choose to choose," they can easily continue not to choose. By contrast, district-wide open enrollment plans, such as exist in New York City's Community School District 4 and in Cambridge, Massachusetts, force every student to choose a school, even if they simply choose their neighborhood school (Crain, 1992).

Equality and School Finance

Although during the past decade many argued that money was not the critical issue in school improvement, and that schools would do better if simply freed of "regulatory baggage" (Timar, 1992), the vast differences between district expenditures across the nation continued to make school finance an important educational issue. In fact, the problem of finance has been particularly acute in urban schools, and it has been deeply linked with school control issues. At a time when central-city schools have become increasingly isolated from the mainstream of civic, political, and economic life, the special Federal and state programs that have provided critical services for disadvantaged and handicapped children have also weakened the managerial and administrative control of big city school systems (Hill, Wise, & Shapiro, 1989). It may be true that money does not necessarily buy better education, that some large school systems may be both top heavy and too specialized and fragment responsibility (Hill et al., 1989), and that "determining fiscal equity is a very complex issue especially since the needs of students differ" (Taylor & Piche, 1990, p. 1). However, there has been a strong belief, particularly among under-resourced districts, both that money is a fundamental requisite for buying good schooling, and that a number of factors in urban districts increase educational costs beyond district resources. A recent study of 47 big city school districts (Council of Great City Schools, 1992) argues that, while large urban schools deal with more disadvantaged students, their per-pupil expenditures are lower than the national average, and far lower than suburban per-pupil expenditures. In 1991, while big city schools averaged $5,200 per pupil, the national average was $5,512, and suburban districts averaged $6,073.

In fact, disparities in funding between rich and poor states, and between rich and poor districts in the same state, grew in the 1980s. The disparities had two sources. First, the reliance on property taxes has

created vast inequities. Second, although the states' share of education budgets has increased greatly, poor states tend to have the most disadvantaged students and thus have higher costs. Moreover, within-state inequities arise because state formulas do not equalize—and in some instances contribute to—funding inequities. Not surprisingly, within states, poor districts overall also have the largest proportions of poor and minority students. For example, Texas, whose student population is 36.2 minority, has an expenditure ratio of 2.8 to 1 for areas with small minority populations compared to areas with large minority populations (Denbo, Sneed, & Thomas, 1990).

What do differences in funding buy? First, money can reduce class size, although there are arguments about whether class size matters to achievement (Hanushek, 1989; Mueller, Chase, & Walden, 1988). In fact, a wide gap exists in class size between rich and poor school districts. In a 1986-87 study, there were 18.3 elementary students for every teacher in Baltimore, compared with 14.4 students per teacher in nearby suburban Montgomery County (Taylor & Piche, 1990).

Yet differences between rich and poor districts go far beyond pupil-teacher ratios. Curricular offerings also vary with the economic resources of the school district. Low-income students in property poor districts have less demanding mathematics and science curricula, fewer laboratories, and older laboratory equipment. Poor districts are also less likely to offer advanced placement courses, to have enough computers, or to have sufficient faculty to be able to make them available to all students (Taylor & Piche, 1990).

Further, poor school districts are the districts most burdened by students with the need for extra services. This is part of the origin of the term "municipal overburden," which applies not only to the needs of urban schools, but also to the other competing pressures on city budgets. Indeed,

as Hodgkinson (1990) has argued, the country's most serious educational problems are in the

> inner-city schools, where the highest percentage of "at-risk" students can be found; where classes are large (even though these children need the *most* individual attention); where health care, housing, transportation, personal security, and community stability are inadequate; where it is *very* hard to recruit and retain high-quality teachers and administrators; and where racial segregation still exists to an appalling degree, despite our best efforts (p. 13).

A recent analysis of districts that comprise the Council of Great City Schools (1992) shows that 88.9 percent have programs for infants of teen mothers, 84.4 percent have parenting programs for teens and 77.8 percent have parenting programs for adults, and 75.6 percent have latchkey programs. It is because of costs such as these, associated with educating large numbers of poor students with "special needs," that the average per pupil expenditure adjusted for special needs in the Council of Great City Schools was $3,861, compared with the national average per-pupil expenditure of $4,132. That is, once need is taken into account, urban students are funded at about 7 percent below the national average.

Finally, a heavy economic burden in urban schools is caused by old buildings and high repairs. In 1985, needed school building repairs were estimated at $680 million in New York City, $315 million in Los Angeles, $308 million Detroit, and $280 million in Chicago (Cetron, 1985). It would not be surprising if the money needed for these repairs has all increased since then.

Recent court cases in such states as Kentucky, New Jersey, Texas, California, and Montana have attempted to create tax equity between rich and poor districts. Remedies have included wealth equalization, which would assure that the same tax effort resulted in the same or similar dollar

yield; more money for special needs children, which would ensure that the poorest districts are financially able to provide educational offerings over and above those of the wealthy suburban districts without special needs children; a focus on specific educational needs, which may provide a basis for funding such initiatives as prekindergarten classes for disadvantaged three- and four-year-olds; and caps on wealthy district spending, which would allow poorer districts to catch up (Taylor & Piche, 1990).

The problem is that the confluence of differentials in funding and different student populations has confounded the question of whether tax poor districts have adequate resources. One solution is to use outcome measures as a way of assessing equity. Taylor and Piche (1990) suggest that the educational research of the 1980s has yielded a number of strategies necessary to effective education–for example, preschool child development programs, small class size, counseling and social services–and that their availability in a school district might be yet another way of determining fiscal equality.

Starting with the Milliken II ruling in 1977, resource and school effectiveness issues have joined racial balance in desegregation politics. For example, in St. Louis, a desegregation settlement linked costly improvements in segregated inner-city schools to create attractive magnets with a voluntary transfer plan combining city and suburban schools. In Kansas City, where the district claimed economic injury caused by a diminishing tax potential and the increased costs of educating disadvantaged students, the courts approved a remedial plan requiring funds for reduced class size, new program specialists, a variety of new educational programs, and an upgrading of the school district's facilities. Thus, in both these cases, while student assignment issues are relegated to a minor role, the issue of racial inequity is addressed through resource reallocation (Colton & Uchitelle, 1992).

Not surprisingly, the threat of legislative reforms has generated widespread resistance from suburban (largely white) taxpayers (Taylor & Piche, 1990). In California, challenges to inequalities in funding led to property tax revolts, and so to the gutting of school budgets statewide, which has proven dangerous even to white students. Thus it has been suggested that the popularity of the school choice (pro-privatization) movement arises out of this dilemma, appealing to employers and affluent whites who don't want their property taxes raised (Folbre, 1992).

Policies and Practices for Educating Special Needs Students

Since the 1960s special services have been delivered to students who, because of the adverse effects of poverty or minority status, experience difficulty achieving in the regular classroom. These practices use white middle-class students as a model for acceptable normal functioning, and reflect the belief that the problems experienced by minority low-income students are largely the result of a *lack* of the right educational experiences in their home and neighborhood. They operate on the assumption that the educational system can remain untouched if extra services are simply offered to some disadvantaged students. Rather than believing that students from different backgrounds come to school with a variety of skills which might be tapped in educating them, program developers also tend to see low-income and minority students as "disadvantaged" and thus offer programs that are compensatory in their structure and goals.

In this section, we focus on several key compensatory programs: Head Start, Chapter 1, bilingual education, and dropout prevention.

Head Start

Head Start was established under Title V of former President Lyndon Johnson's Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, and was reauthorized in 1986 and 1991 (Gall, 1991). Directed to preschool students from poor families, it is unique among compensatory programs in its linking of education with health services and high levels of parental participation (Mallory & Goldsmith, 1991). Both because of such linkages and because it directly serves young children, Head Start has been almost universally praised as a success and has been held up as a model to be emulated by other special needs programs.

In 1989, there were 1,283 widely varying local Head Start programs, serving more than 450,000 students (Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, 1990). By 1990, the number of students had grown to almost 541,000. Of these, the majority came from poor, single-parent families (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1991). Thirty-three percent were white, 38 percent African American, and 22 percent Hispanic (National Head Start Association, 1990).

Despite these numbers, fewer than one third of all eligible children are enrolled in Head Start programs around the country (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1991; Zill & Wolpow, 1990). In addition, while Federal allocations for Head Start increased during the 1980s, they did not keep pace with inflation, resulting in lower real-dollar funding for the program today than in 1977 (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1991). This has led to serious problems in developing and maintaining facilities for local programs, as well as inordinately low salaries for teachers (Collins, 1990; Lombardi, 1990). Moreover, while Head Start was initially conceived of as a multi-year program benefitting children between the ages of two and five via full-day programs, it is now attended predominantly by four-year-olds, and only 6

percent of all programs provide full-day services (Lombardi, 1990; National Head Start Association, 1990).

Although most Head Start programs have demonstrated significant short-term cognitive benefits for students, positive effects tend to fade over time (Reynolds, 1990). In fact, Head Start and non-Head Start students are often comparable in cognitive and socioemotional performance by the end of the first year of regular school (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). Head Start children are less likely than other disadvantaged children to be either placed in special education classes or retained in a grade (Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources, 1991). Nevertheless, Reynolds (1990) found a significant positive correlation between the fading of cognitive gains and such factors as assignment to special education classes, school mobility, and retention, all of which have traditionally plagued the special needs students targeted by Head Start.

In addition, the use of standardized tests for high-stakes situations like admissions to kindergarten or placement in an ability level, causes additional problems, since students may be "retained" or tracked before they even have a chance to begin (Madaus, 1992; Raver & Zigler, 1991). Furthermore, Head Start's emphasis on IQ tests as measures of cognitive gains has some clear racial implications; as Raver and Zigler argue, the use of such tests may force non-Anglo children to face a "dual set of social demands" from both their own cultural group, and that of the white, dominant culture (1991, p. 6). The increased importance of testing in Head Start programs has also created the danger of "teaching to the test," which means emphasizing narrowly defined cognitive skills, when what preschoolers may need is much more emphasis on social skills (Raver & Zigler, 1991).

The areas in which Head Start has unquestionably been successful are precisely those in which cognitive gains and IQ tests have not been

emphasized: health, social skills, and parent involvement in education. The importance of these aspects of Head Start cannot be overemphasized, since they appear to be not only necessary to teachers seeing students as prepared for elementary school, but are also prerequisites for the cognitive performance that students are later expected to demonstrate.

Chapter 1

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was a cornerstone of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. Since 1981, its successor, Chapter 1, has been providing school districts with assistance to deliver supplementary services to more than five million poor, low-achieving students, or about one in eight public school students nationwide. While nearly every district in the country receives some Chapter 1 support, urban schools are the largest beneficiaries of the program. As of October, 1990, a full 35 percent of public school students enrolled in Chapter 1 programs—the largest single group—attended urban schools (Millsap, Turnbull, Moss, Brigham, Gamse, & Marks, 1992). In 1988-89, 57 percent of Chapter 1 participants were minority students; moreover, between 1979 and 1989, the percentage of minority students in the program had increased significantly (Sinclair & Gutmann, 1991).

Chapter 1 has received widespread political support, despite the fact that research supporting its strategies is less than convincing. In 1986, a Congress-mandated National Assessment of Chapter 1 concluded that, while the program had small but positive short-term effects, it had not succeeded in its stated goal of moving poor, low-achieving students substantially toward the achievement levels of their more advantaged peers (Kennedy, Birman, & Demaline, 1987). Moreover, the program had emphasized regulatory compliance and fiscal integrity at the expense of educational quality (Odden, 1987).

As a result of these studies, the 1988 Hawkins-Stafford Act mandated a number of changes in Chapter 1. The intent was to improve the program's effectiveness by shifting its emphasis from funding to education. The Act required that districts coordinate Chapter 1 with regular instructional programs by reducing the number of "pull-out" programs, and that they increase parent participation in the programs, which had always been mandated but had not been enforced. Most importantly, the Act made districts accountable for enhanced achievement among the students most in need, requiring them to identify and improve schools in which Chapter 1 had not been successful.

While the Hawkins-Stafford Act has led to some significant progress in the implementation of Chapter 1 within schools, the Act has not altered "the political calculus that has stabilized over the years at the local level" (Herrington & Orland, 1992, p. 177). Most importantly, pull-outs remain the dominant model for implementation of Chapter 1. Not only do 89 percent of districts still utilize limited pull-out programs, but the percentage of districts employing extended pull-out programs (in which Chapter 1 students spend more than 25 percent of instructional time outside of the regular classroom) actually increased between 1985-86 and 1990-91 (Millsap et al., 1992). This continued–and even increased–emphasis on pull-outs has meant that Chapter 1 programs are often poorly coordinated with regular programs (Anderson & Pellicer, 1990), and that Chapter 1 students often receive less actual instructional time than other students (Passow, 1988).

In addition, the provisions of the Act enforcing school accountability have had a number of unexpected effects. Because student improvement is largely measured by improved scores on national tests, states and districts have tended to set very low minimum standards for the evaluation of that improvement (Heid, 1991). Although the Act "encourages" the use of additional measures of success (LeTendre, 1991),

it has created an over-reliance on traditional tests (Davis, 1991). The same reliance on standardized testing may also reward schools for retaining students and reinforce a tendency to teach Chapter 1 students nothing more than a narrow set of skills which are easily tested (Slavin & Madden, 1991).

Bilingual Education

Although bilingual education in the United States originated in some communities as early as the nineteenth century (Wong-Fillmore & Meyer, 1992), its recent history began in 1968 with Title VII of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which set aside funds for the creation of programs for language minority students. The 1974 Supreme Court decision in *Lau v. Nichols* reinforced provisions of Title VII, requiring schools to provide language minority students with equal access to education by taking language needs into account in the development of educational programming.

Some districts have had considerable success in their efforts to integrate language minority students into mainstream programs (Brisk, 1991; Trute, 1991). However, most tend to rely on submersion (or "sink-or-swim") methods, which drop students into full-time English language classrooms without providing any linguistic assistance, and are thus not really bilingual programs at all. Other common methods of educating language minority students are compensatory in nature, utilizing either part-time pull-outs or "transitional" full pull-out programs. Neither submersion nor the various pull-out models have shown significant or consistent success (Ramirez, Yuen, Ramey, & Pasta, 1991).

The use of compensatory models for the development of bilingual programs has had a serious impact both on their effectiveness and on the ways in which language minority students have been perceived by

educators. Indeed, as Soto (1991) suggests, the fact that these students are often labeled as "Limited English Proficient" may itself mark them as somehow educationally deficient. In any case, there has been a dramatic overplacement of these students in special education and remedial tracks. Ortiz and Polyzoi (cited in Harry, 1992), found that in three large urban districts in Texas, 83 percent of language minority students were labelled learning-disabled.

The susceptibility of language minority students to misplacement stems largely from two factors. First, even if they are fluent in English, they tend to score lower on standardized tests than native English speakers. Second, largely because of language barriers, the parents of these students rarely participate in their children's schools, which means that they are less protected from misplacement than are other children (Costas, 1991).

One of the biggest problems facing students whose primary language is one other than English has been the considerable politicization of the debate surrounding bilingual education. Since the early 1980s, supporters of bilingualism have been pitted against a number of "English Only" political action groups (Ovando, 1988). In addition to having a stifling effect on research into effective methods of linguistic integration (Lucas, Henze, & Donato, 1990; Donato & Garcia, 1992), such a political climate has often meant that the energy of educators, which could have been used to further the education of language minority students, has been expended in defensive rhetoric.

The complexity of the issues surrounding bilingual education has been further compounded by a rapid growth in the numbers of language minority students in urban areas. In Los Angeles, the percentage of students whose native language is not English increased from 15 percent in 1980 to 31 percent in 1989 (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority

Languages Affairs, 1990). Nationwide, language minority students may account for as many as 20 percent of the student population by the turn of the century (Porter, 1990). The number of different languages spoken by these students has also increased; in some urban areas, as many as 100 different languages can be heard in the schools (Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Languages Affairs, 1990). In such a cultural context, bilingual education must be supplemented with–if not replaced by–multilingual programs.

The requirement that districts implement bilingual programs to serve language minority students can conflict with the mandate to desegregate all students. However, when such a high proportion of Hispanic students are in heavily segregated schools (70 percent are in segregated schools and 30 percent in heavily desegregated–90 percent or more minority–schools), real desegregation for many Hispanic students is only a fantasy. Still, the desegregation mandate has been used by some districts as an opportunity to either ignore the needs of language minority students entirely or to resegregate schools along language lines (Donato & Garcia, 1992). Despite these dire conditions, a recent study by Lindholm (1991) suggests that the most promising programs seek to develop and maintain high levels of bilingual proficiency by fully integrating students with diverse linguistic backgrounds. These programs attempt to strengthen dual language skills for *both* language minority and language majority students, a process that furthers the goals of both integration and bilingual education.

Dropout Prevention

Like Head Start, dropout prevention programs are intended not only to compensate for perceived educational deficiencies, but also to be *preventative*. By identifying a group of students who are "at risk" of future school failure, they attempt to develop programming before the problems

of these students become so serious that they leave school altogether. While the most effective have been programs for elementary school students (Duckenfield, Hamby, & Smink, 1990), dropout prevention programs are generally aimed at high school students, where they are the least effective (Lindner, 1990). In some areas, such as New York City, records are not even kept of students who drop out before beginning high school (Lindner, 1990).

Although the dropout rate has hovered between 25 percent and 29 percent nationwide since the mid-sixties (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991), the problem has been especially acute in urban areas, where nearly 40 percent of all dropouts live (Schwartz, 1991). Furthermore, despite a significant increase in white blue-collar dropouts, the dropout rate for poor minority students is significantly higher than for more advantaged white students (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Ekstrom, Goertz, Pollack, & Rock, 1987). Dropout rates have been especially high among Hispanic students. Indeed, a 1990 report on New Jersey schools by the Public Affairs Research Institute estimated that up to 80 percent of all Puerto Rican students in the Newark schools drop out, most before they even enter high school (Burch, 1992).

As a result of the demographics of dropouts, the term "at-risk students" has become little more than a label attached to a school's minority population (Natriello, McDill, & Pallas, 1990). This has led to the unfortunate and unintended consequence that the "at-risk" label itself, often attached to students as early as the second or third grade (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991), may function as a self-fulfilling prophecy of failure for labelled students (Schwartz, 1991).

Despite their stated aim to forestall future problems, dropout prevention programs often utilize techniques and procedures similar to those of other compensatory programs. Dropout programs in most districts

involve extensive remediation and lowered academic expectations as well as extended, and often permanent, pull-outs (LeCompte & Dworkin, 1991; Natriello et al., 1990). In fact, in a study of six urban school districts, four even utilized detention as a method to lower the dropout rate, while two districts defined the suspension of students as a dropout prevention tool (Lindner, 1990).

Nevertheless, some interesting practices have been developed to prevent dropping out. They include efforts to involve parents, local businesses, and community groups; and to institute extensive and individualized counseling and mentoring programs (Williams, 1991; National Foundation for the Improvement of Education, 1990). All six districts studied by Lindner (1990) had strong counseling programs; almost all also emphasized individualized tutoring and parental involvement. One third of them added such practices as peer counseling, job training, and business alliances.

Still, the success of these projects has been mixed. For instance, despite promises of jobs and funding for college after graduation under the provisions of the Boston Compact dropout prevention program, that city's dropout rate increased from 33 to 40 percent between 1982 and 1989 (Toch, 1991). Lindner (1990) found that, even though all six of the districts in his study reported improved attendance, there was no change in the dropout rate. At the same time, in-school career academies have had promising results, cutting the dropout rate to almost nothing (Toch, 1991). Other successful strategies have been quality early childhood programs for all students, summer enhancement programs, concentrated reading and writing programs in the early grades, and comprehensive community and business collaboration, linked with career counseling and workforce readiness training (Duckenfield et al., 1990; Hahn, Danzberger, & Lefkowitz, 1987).

Moving from Special Needs to Systemic Change

The preceding section described current programs that are largely compensatory in nature and intent. That is, they aim to make up for deprivations in students' backgrounds and environments. By contrast, this section discusses a number of school practices which, in the process of enormous change, are moving toward an education system that is more inclusive for all students.

We begin with standardized testing, which has been under great pressure to evolve into other assessment practices. We also discuss tracking, which has been widely criticized, and summarize new efforts to detrack and create heterogeneous groupings. This discussion leads to an analysis of several new models for school restructuring, which attempt to create, as one program puts it, "success for all" students. We then discuss multicultural education, which is the curricular side of inclusiveness; and finally we discuss differences in student learning styles, and how schools can accommodate them.

Standardized Testing and New Forms of Assessment

Educational testing has played an unprecedented role in the past decade. While standardized tests have driven schooling as never before, the content and process of testing have themselves become a center of controversy and have been forced to change. To understand the current debates and changes in testing, it is necessary to go back to the early 1980s.

The Nation at Risk and other commission reports of the early 1980s argued the decline in national educational quality on the basis of students' standardized test scores. Led by governors and state legislatures, often with strong business backing, these commissions argued for stiffer high school

graduation requirements, increased student testing, new school accountability, and higher teacher standards. By 1990, 47 states used testing to monitor student, school, and/or school district performance; to certify students for grade promotion or high school graduation; to identify students in need of remediation; and to allocate state compensatory education aid (Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center, 1990).

The national movement to raise standards had some positive effects, including apparent improvement in mathematics and science proficiency (but no apparent gain in reading or writing proficiency), an increase in student homework, and some lowering of the dropout rate. There was also a narrowing in the gap between white students and black and Hispanic students in reading, and a narrowing of the gap between black and white students in mathematics (Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center, 1990). However, by the end of the decade, there was a general sense among educators that testing as a vehicle for change was limited, even problematic. In particular, the "high stakes" nature of testing, in which the success of schools, teachers, and students were increasingly tied to test scores, had led to distortions in the education system, as efforts were made to improve scores through special preparations and even teaching to the tests.

Despite the apparent gains made by minorities over the decade, the relationship between the test scores of minority students and their actual learning was of particular concern to educators and researchers. First, some argued that the tests are biased in content and format against the learning or thinking styles of minorities, particularly those whose native language is not English (Miller-Jones, 1989). Second, it was said that standardized tests are a much better indicator of student background than they are of school learning (Archibald & Newmann, 1988). If this is so, it means that the score increases might not even imply improvements in

schooling. Third, some questioned whether all students, regardless of race, ethnicity, and social class, are exposed equally to the curricular goals reflected in the tests (Alexander & Parsons, 1991; Oakes, 1985). Fourth, and finally, it was said that the growth in testing programs is a particular curse on low-income students.

As a new body of research has suggested, urban low SES school districts conduct more testing and link that testing to promotion and graduation more frequently than do non-urban high SES districts (Bauer, 1992). Moreover, in an effort to raise standards indicated by high test scores, without sufficient academic supports for better instruction, schools subject many students in large urban schools to a narrow, test-driven curriculum. In fact, the narrowing of curriculum is likely to be greatest in schools serving at-risk and disadvantaged students, where there is greatest pressure to improve scores (Herman & Golan, 1990).

The degradation of instruction and curriculum prompted by high stakes testing has also led to a movement to change the nature of the tests. Thus, by the end of the eighties, many educators were trying to create tests that were both "worth taking" and could be used on a mass scale. Inspired by the English national testing system, which bases its final year assessments on student portfolios, performance-based or authentic assessments became the emerging alternative. In fact, the standards movement led to an assessment reform movement (Brandt, 1992).

However, as school districts around the country have leapt to add portfolios and other performance or authentic assessments to their testing programs, these new tests have also begun they would be criticized. Most important, given a "high-stakes" environment, it is said that teaching to the test will likely continue, whatever the test format (Madaus & Kellaghan, 1991; Mehrens, 1992). Moreover, pressure to improve test scores, even if

the tests are "authentic," will lead to educational distortions, unless accompanied by supports for instructional improvement (Herman, 1992).

Although it was hoped that performance assessments would show smaller ethnic group differences than multiple-choice tests do (that is, they would be less biased), initial research does not suggest any improvements in the scores of minority students. Instead, these tests have been criticized as more susceptible to subjective interpretation and bias (Mehrens, 1992). One solution, it is thought, is to use multiple assessments with disadvantaged students, both to avoid the misplacement of students because of a single low score, and to give students detailed feedback, which has been shown to improve learning (Navarrete, Wilde, Nelson, Martinez, & Hargett, 1990; Natriello, Pallas, & Riehl, 1991).

Finally, as the idea of a national assessment program continues to be on the agenda, many educators question whether any assessment—even the most sophisticated—is the best way to drive school reform. Therefore, educators worry that the focus on testing, and particularly the drive to create a national test, will be a regrettable diversion from the hard problems of rethinking schooling.

From Tracking to Detracking

Recently, a wide range of national educational and child advocacy organizations have recommended the abolition of student placement by perceived ability, most commonly called tracking. The reason for this recommendation is that too often tracking creates class- and race-linked differences in access to learning. In fact, because of the inequalities in opportunity which result from tracking, it has been deemed a major contributor to the continuing gaps in achievement between disadvantaged and affluent students, and between minorities and whites (Oakes, 1985; 1992).

In fact, tracking remains widespread. For example, in grade seven about two thirds of all schools use homogeneous groupings in some or all subjects, and about a fifth use ability groupings in each subject (Braddock, 1990). Although recent concerns for inequities in tracking have caused many districts to eliminate the low tracks or to rename their tracks to imply a less hierarchical organization, low-income and minority students increasingly predominate in bottom tracks (Ekstrom, 1992).

One line of major resistance to detracking comes from those concerned about how heterogeneous grouping will influence the learning of high achievers or gifted and talented students. Recently two meta-analyses of a number of tracking studies have suggested rather opposite conclusions. While Slavin (1990) found no particular benefits to any group of achievers in tracked classes, Kulik (1991) suggests that this is because Slavin did not include accelerated and enriched classes in his sample. By contrast, Kulik found that the benefits are positive and often large for students in special classes for the gifted and talented, and that accelerated classes in which talented children cover, say, four grades in three years often boost achievement levels a good deal. However, Oakes (1992), who has long maintained that heterogeneous groupings will benefit even high achievers, has pointed out that the benefits that students in accelerated classes receive are not from the homogeneity of the group, but from their enhanced curriculum. Finally, research by Useem (1992) makes clear that districts where most students perform above the national average can also be the most selective. Thus, it is actually here that many capable students are cheated by being sent to general or slow classes.

There are several aspects of the tracking process that place minority students disproportionately into low groups. First, as was suggested in the last section, despite recent gains, low-income minority students tend to score lower on achievement tests. Second, most schools track students on the basis of tested achievement–and these tests are often

in areas unrelated to the subject in which the student is tracked (Ekstrom, 1992). Third, achievement tests are used more frequently in schools with high minority enrollments—in other words, exactly in those cases where other sources of performance information might make the process more equitable (Ekstrom, 1992). In fact, it is because of the predominance of minority students in low and remedial track classes that Shephard (1991) has argued, "assessment and diagnosis turn into sorting and segregation when special help implies special placement" (p. 281).

There has also been concern about the unequal influence of parent decisions on student placement. While white middle-class parents are often active in deciding the track for their children, minority parents are less likely to be consulted about placements. Moreover, the likelihood of parents having input into tracking decisions declines in schools with high minority populations. In general, the rule about parents' involvement in tracking decisions can be summed up by the phrase "the squeaky wheel gets the grease," which means that low-income students, whose parents are too overburdened by other responsibilities to pressure the school about placement issues, get placed by the school without parent recommendations (Braddock, 1990; Ekstrom, 1992).

Since low tracks are supposed to be related to students' perceived ability to learn, the curriculum offered in them is simpler and less fulfilling. Not surprisingly, when students are placed in different tracks, the achievement differences between them widen. Lower track classes have less time devoted to instruction (and more to behavior), and give less homework. Lower track students also show more alienation from school, exhibit more classroom misconduct, and have higher dropout rates (Oakes, 1985).

Recent attempts to detrack schools around the country have identified a number of factors that ensure successful detracking: (1) It is

said that schools must change from a hierarchical and exclusionary culture to a culture of inclusiveness. That is, teachers, parents, and students alike must believe in the right and ability of students from every background to learn from the best kind of curriculum. They must also be convinced that all students can gain academically and socially from learning together and from each other. (2) Parent involvement is said to be necessary to a successful detracking process. (3) There must be professional development and support. (4) Change must be phased-in. (5) All routines that separate students from each other or exclude some students must be rethought in the light of the goal of inclusiveness. (6) Although detracking takes place at the school level, a supportive policy coupled with technical assistance at the district and state levels is important (Wheelock, 1992).

In addition, since tracking is deeply interwoven with standardized testing practices, assessment programs must also be rethought along the lines suggested in the preceding section. New forms of performance-based testing must be instituted that stress the interactive, problem-solving, and egalitarian methods of a detracked school (Ascher, 1990).

Finally, instruction and curriculum (covered in the next section) must be geared toward heterogeneous groups of students. In a detracked school, teachers do not have a homogeneous group in which to pace their instruction to the "average" student; they must individualize learning through personalized assignments, learning centers, cooperative learning, and tutoring.

Although only a few schools have completely detracked, a comparison of homogeneous classrooms with heterogeneous classrooms in a district that was in the process of detracking suggests that minority students may experience a significant change in their teacher-student interactions when classrooms are heterogeneous. In this study (Villegas & Watts, 1992), teachers in low-ability classes spent more time telling

minority students what to do than white students, and they also criticized black students more than white students. In middle-group classes, teachers spent more time giving information to and eliciting information from minority students than white students. And in high-ability classes, teachers initiated more academically-oriented interactions with their white students than with their minority students, but focused more frequently on the behavior of their minority students. By contrast with these three homogeneous track situations, in the heterogeneously grouped classes, teachers engaged in interactions with minority students that were less controlling and less behavior oriented; in short, they were more like their interactions with whites.

Restructuring Models

Over the past several years, as school improvements generated by the top-down legislation of the standards movement appeared limited, a growing call to "restructure" schools was heard. The word "restructuring" has had a variety of meanings, from school-based management to teacher empowerment, but all its connotations have included a reawakened enthusiasm for grassroots reform. However, few administrators have the time, creativity, funds, or confidence to design their own reforms from scratch. Thus, in many districts school restructuring has meant a reliance on apparently successful restructuring models.

In this section we review three school restructuring models that have been particularly popular among schools serving poor, predominantly minority students: James Comer's *School Development Program*, Robert Slavin's *Success for All*, and Henry Levin's *Accelerated Schools*. All three models were developed out of an urgency to end the ineffectiveness of schools educating poor minority students; all attempt to undo the hierarchical organizations that too often give poor minority students the fewest educational opportunities; all three emerge from a belief that *all*

students can learn, and that expectations must be high for all students. Yet because the three models assume that school change must begin with each school building, where both students' needs and educational resources are always unique, a common goal of their originators has been to enable quite different schools to replicate the essential aspects of their models, while responding to their specific situational needs. Currently, there are approximately 165 School Development Programs, about 50 Success for All programs, and around 140 Accelerated Schools throughout the country (Ascher, 1993).

Comer's School Development Program (SDP) is a response to the common distrust and alienation between school people and urban families, and reflects Comer's belief that, to learn well, children have to form attachments and bond with their teachers. Calling on teachers, school staff, and parents to work together, the SDP seeks to reconnect the lost ties between the home and the school and to turn the school into a nurturing place (Comer, 1980).

In its attempt to create collaborative participation, the program uses three vehicles: multi-level parent involvement, a school planning management team, and a mental health team. On the assumption that teaching cannot be improved without bringing parents into the process, and that parents should be in the school *before* problems occur, parents are used as classroom assistants, participate on the school planning management team, and sponsor school activities such as potluck suppers, book fairs, etc. The school planning management team, which includes parents, teachers, school staff, and a mental health specialist, meets weekly. It is responsible for creating a comprehensive school plan and for addressing school climate, academic achievement, and public relations. Finally, the mental health team, which includes a variety of health professionals, is responsible for assuring that individual problems are considered ecologically. Thus, they begin by first suggesting ways to

manage early and potential problem behavior by changing school policy and programming, and only when this does not work do they treat the individual child or teacher as having a problem (Comer, 1980; 1989).

Although the School Development Program stresses the acquisition of basic skills, the model generally leaves pedagogical issues to the schools themselves, and a variety of instructional programs can be found at SDP schools (Ascher, 1992).

By contrast, Success for All (SFA), developed by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, offers very specific guidance on the components of schools' instructional programs. Based on research showing what works with at-risk students, the SFA model has several thrusts: early intervention in literacy learning, before students fall behind; immediate and intense correctives, inside the regular classroom, when learning problems appear; and parent involvement in the support of the learning (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Livermon & Dolan, 1990). Although SFA is constructed specifically for schools whose resources are enriched by Chapter 1, taking on the model means restructuring the entire school, rather than using Chapter 1 funds for pull-outs or other special programs.

Specifically, the model contains such specific interventions as language development in a prekindergarten or a full-day kindergarten; a *Beginning Reading* curriculum, initiated in kindergarten or first grade and continuing through the primer level; heterogeneous groups, except during a 90-minute reading/language arts period; one-to-one tutoring; and a family support team that trains parent volunteers, coordinates social services, and relates to parents regarding student behavior (Slavin, Madden, Karweit, Dolan, & Wasik, 1992). Although schools must find a way to institute each of these components, they can substitute a different reading program than the one recommended by SFA, or use Comer's parent involvement program instead of SFA's parent program.

Finally, the Accelerated Schools (AS) model, developed by Henry Levin and his colleagues at Stanford University, is based on the belief that schools improve through organizational change. The critical idea is that when teachers and students have the power to plan educational activities, learning improves; when they do not, instruction becomes "a litany of mechanical activities." Inspired by workers' cooperatives and workplace democracy, AS is based on a "collaborative inquiry" model that drives both school governance and learning (Ascher, 1992). A common vision, developed at the school site by school staff, students, parents, and the community, must use the strengths of each (Levin & Hopfenberg, 1991).

The principle vehicles for governance in Accelerated Schools are a steering committee, composed of the principal, representative teachers, other school staff, students, and parents; cadres, which are organized around particular areas like assessment, mathematics, or scheduling, and meet on a weekly basis; and the school as a whole, which must approve all major decisions about curriculum, instruction, and resource allocation that have implications for the entire school (Levin, 1987).

Despite this stress on organization, it is in fact the instruction of an AS that gives it its name. In contrast to existing models of remedial and compensatory education, AS is supposed to give urban students a particularly enriched and accelerated type of instruction. While Levin and his colleagues resist legislating specific curriculum or instructional methods, it is their belief that when "collaborative inquiry" drives decisions about what to teach, learning will also be based on problem-solving.

Although both Comer and Levin have been wary about using traditional tests to evaluate the performance of students in the schools following their models (and the Levin group has been creative in rethinking assessment of its program), all three educators have bowed to the importance of standardized tests in educational research. Thus, a good

deal of information on test scores of students in schools using each of these models has been released. Unfortunately, however, the very strength of these models–that they each allow for quite idiosyncratic projects–has created problems in systematic comparison, so the only definitive statement that can be made is that students in schools adopting one of the three models generate gains over their peers. All three models also show improvements in school attendance by students and teachers, as well as in parent participation.

What causes the gains in each of these models? Perhaps it is because Comer's School Development Program heals breaches between the family and the school and creates an ethos of caring, Slavin's Success for All gives students the cognitive skills they need, and Levin's Accelerated Schools provides a critical organizational change that releases both school staff and students for learning. In fact, both Levin and Comer might well argue that the Success for All program would experience even greater gains if, instead of being a package developed by researchers outside the school, it was generated by the school staff, parents, and students themselves. On the other hand, Slavin might well counter that participation does not always lead to the wisest of educational solutions, and that the other two programs could easily become more effective, if only they paid more attention to instituting proven instructional strategies. The truth is, however, given the existing research, that there is no way to argue why one particular model or another is succeeding. Because all three models contain a number of ingredients, it is impossible to isolate the power of any one component, or even of why each is successful (Ascher, 1993).

Heterogeneous Groupings and Cooperative Education

The preponderance of restructuring programs that advocate bringing children of all abilities together into regular classrooms has

created a rush to provide teachers with models for teaching mixed-ability classes (Levin, 1987; Oakes, 1985). Of these, cooperative education has been among the most popular (Mills & Durden, 1992) and most heavily researched (Slavin, 1990). Developed by Robert Slavin and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins University, cooperative learning involves groups of students who share responsibility for each other's learning. Currently a number of packaged models exist for cooperative education, including "Team Assisted Individualization" (TAI) and "Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition" (CIRC). While some models insert a competitive element, others stress the building of team scores by mutual cooperation (Slavin, 1990).

However, Mills and Durden (1992) have pointed out that two issues tend to be confused in the literature on heterogeneous versus homogeneous groupings: the composition of classes and the teaching process. For example, research on cooperative learning has often been used to endorse the effectiveness of heterogeneous groupings, even though the research studies cooperative learning approaches with students who have a rather narrow as well as wide range of knowledge and skills.

Several questions remain unanswered. Will students at the far end of tested ability still contribute equally, feeling equally engaged, and learn the same amount in a particular subject? If high ability students are allowed to proceed at their own pace within heterogeneous groupings, will the gap between them and low ability students continue to increase? Are there some subjects, as Slavin suggests is the case for reading, where students still need to be grouped by ability?

Finally, the enthusiasm for mixed ability classes has tended to ignore the importance of *what* is taught, and *how* the teaching occurs. We turn to these issues in the next two sections.

Multicultural Education

Unlike most other efforts to educate students with special needs, multicultural education has, with rare exceptions, been neither legally mandated nor systematically codified (Olsen & Mullen, 1990). Nor has there been much agreement on an appropriate and specific definition of the term. Indeed, it has often been defined so broadly as to include "any set of processes by which schools work with rather than against oppressed groups" (Sleeter, 1992, p. 141). This lack of precise definition, tied to a serious lack of funding sources, has meant that research into the methods and results of multicultural education has been seriously limited (Grant & Millar, 1992). In fact, as recently as 1987, almost no research studies had been conducted (Sleeter & Grant, 1987). Still, multicultural programs are highly visible–and hotly contested–components of educational systems, particularly in urban schools, where minority students often constitute a majority of the student enrollment (Villegas, 1991).

Multicultural education originated in the 1960s and '70s as a response to the long history of efforts to "assimilate" minority groups into the dominant American culture (Sobol, 1990; McCarthy, 1990). It was also conceived as a corrective to the compensatory approaches which arose at the same time, many of which relied upon assumptions of cultural deprivation and the necessity of helping students to overcome their presumed deficits (McCarthy, 1990). Nevertheless, multicultural education has often taken the form of compensatory programs, aimed at the "transition" of minority students into the mainstream (Gay, 1990).

Efforts to incorporate multiculturalism into the educational system have been largely curricular, usually a relatively modest effort to insert minority representatives into textbooks and lesson plans as well as into the classroom without also addressing broader issues of equity and access (Grant & Millar, 1992). Efforts to adapt and revise this "inclusionary"

model have, as Gay (1990) suggests, emphasized a broader and more pluralistic ideological framework which goes beyond simple inclusion in order to advance equitable access to education and promote "positive attitudes" toward diversity.

The second wave of multicultural education has, like the first, been largely curricular in nature, although it has also taken steps to raise the "sensitivity" of both students and teachers (McDiarmid, 1990). Attempting to reach all students rather than just minority students, it integrates a multicultural approach into all aspects of education, addressing the cultural assets unique to each culture rather than continuing to draw upon "cultural deficit" models (McCarthy, 1990). Its goal is to shift curricular emphasis away from mere inclusion in order to create a multicultural perspective, thus both furthering the goal of integration and broadening the cultural resources of the educational process (Gomez, 1991; Capital Area School Development Association, 1991; Swartz, 1992).

The results have been mixed. Programs to increase teacher sensitivity to cultural diversity have had little success. McDiarmid's (1990) study of one such multicultural Teacher Training Program in Los Angeles, in fact, found that teachers continue to support remedial tracking programs and even to think that, as he puts it, "not all children can learn the same things." Other studies have shown similar results (McCarthy, 1990).

In addition, as the recent contentious debates over "political correctness" and "cultural literacy" have shown, there has been considerable public–and political–resistance to the introduction of multicultural perspectives into the classroom, most often couched in terms of a "threat" to America's traditional emphasis on a strictly European heritage (Schlesinger, 1991; Fact Finders, Inc., 1991).

One result of this politicization of multicultural education has been a pervasive watering-down of the multicultural textbooks available to school districts, as publishers are forced to compromise quality in order to assure that they offend nobody (Lockwood, 1992). Such a practice, unfortunately, merely reinforces the already undemanding curricula typical of compensatory education and lower track programs for minority students (Villegas, 1991).

The single largest problem facing multicultural education programs is the tendency, most clearly seen in the proliferation of inoffensive and undemanding textbooks, to see cultures–even multi-cultures–as monolithic structures rather than as subtle and diverse collections of individual people (Frasier, 1992). The most promising multicultural efforts attempt to address this challenge, creating programs which reflect the cultural specificity of a particular classroom, maintain a high level of intellectual expectation, and are flexible enough to answer the needs of individual students (Swartz, 1992; Shulman & Mesa-Bains, 1990).

Learning Styles Issues

In the section on special needs programs, we developed a critique of educational programming aimed to help low-income and minority students overcome deficits. We pointed out that among the unintentional effects of these special needs programs are a resegregation of poor and minority students, as well as a diluted curriculum that too often reinforces, rather than compensates for, the educational disadvantages of these students. As Winfield and Manning (1992) wrote, under this system many teachers have become "general contractors," avoiding the less academically able students by relegating them to special programs.

Here, we extend our analysis to learning approaches based on difference rather than on deficit.

By making clear that schooling was not helping a growing segment of the student population, the reform movement of the 1980s in turn generated a movement to create more promising practices for poor and minority students—practices that, as their advocates have admitted, will generate more fundamental changes than simply the legislation of higher educational standards. As the Quality Education for Minorities Project (1990, p. 3) has put it, assuming responsibility for the learning of minority students means in part accepting the fact that "people learn in many different ways." This sense of student diversity includes differences that follow race, ethnic, and cultural lines, as well as those that follow lines of social class and gender.

The new emphasis on difference is "not meant to suggest that *no* poor children come to school seriously lacking in school-relevant experiences" (Knapp & Shields, 1990, p. 754). However, those like Knapp and Shields, who want educational programming to stress difference rather than deficit, argue that a focus on deficit runs two risks: first that, "because [students'] patterns of behavior, language use, and values do not match those required in the school setting," teachers are too likely to set low standards for them; and "second, because teachers and administrators fail to adapt and take advantage of the strengths that these students do possess," over time a cycle of failure and despair is created, "culminating in students' turning their backs on school and dropping out" (p. 755). In other words, on an instructional level, the deficit model reproduces the same vicious circle identified as inherent in tracking.

The difference approach to schooling also shares some goals with that of multicultural education. While the deficit approach has generally presupposed a goal of assimilation to a middle-class white norm, the difference approach, like multicultural education, assumes a goal of cultural pluralism, "accommodation without assimilation" (Ogbu, 1985), or the mutual creation by students and teachers of a "hybrid culture" (Au &

Kawakami, 1991). As a result, we have "constructivism" in mathematics and the "whole language movement" in literacy, both of which involve interaction with students as part of curriculum creation (Carnine, 1992).

The stress on the diversity among American students has led to a burgeoning of studies which investigate differences in students' learning styles. In general, the presupposition of these studies has been that culture, socioeconomic status and other aspects of a person's background all affect the ways in which they "prefer" to learn (Jacobs, 1990). For example, "classroom approaches responsive to the culture of Hawaiian children do not work well in classrooms of Navajo children" (Au & Kawakami, 1991, p. 284). And, as Gilbert and Gay (1985) have written regarding poor black students, while schools must hold the same high standards for all students, they need to use special methods with this group. Gilbert and Gay argue that the several arenas in which low-income black students often experience conflict with the school–learning styles, interactional or relational styles, communication styles, and perception of involvement–all need to be considered in new instructional methods.

In fact, learning style research in a number of academic subjects has suggested that, if differences in styles are taken into consideration, the achievement of students improves significantly. This work has been done with particular emphasis on literacy (Au & Kawakami, 1991), reading (Carbo, 1988), and mathematics (Frankenstein & Powell, 1992).

Relating differences in learning styles to racial, ethnic, and social class background has also aroused concern that it might turn into an excuse for a new round of discriminatory practices with minority students (Gordon, 1988). Thus, researchers have suggested that, although there are enormous variations in the way students learn, ethnic status and other sociological differences should not be linked to pedagogy. For example, using a "learning style inventory" which measures preferences concerning

stimuli, environment, emotional responsiveness, working alone or with peers, physical mobility, and so on, Dunn, Beaudry & Klavas (1989), among the strongest proponents of recognizing differences in learning styles, argue that, while there are great differences among student preferences in these areas, "there are as many within-group differences as between group differences."

The focus on learning styles has also led to the position that, whatever the learning styles with which students come to school, they should have an opportunity to learn a repertoire of learning styles (Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992). This is to prevent their being stuck in a particular cultural or gender niche. Moreover, it has been pointed out that it is less productive to spend time diagnosing students' learning styles than to create an environment that offers a diversity of learning opportunities (Saravia-Shore & Arvizu, 1992).

Attention to the relationship between family background and learning styles has stimulated a strand of researchers who support the goal of cultural pluralism to start their analysis by paying attention not only to differences in cultural background, but to the prestige and range of possibilities enjoyed by the various minority groups within the larger society. As Ogbu (1987) has written, the real issue in the academic performance of minority children is not whether the children use a different cognitive or interaction style, but rather:

> first, whether the children come from a segment of society where people have traditionally experienced unequal opportunity to use their education or school credentials in a socially and economically meaningful and rewarding manner; second, whether or not the relationship between the minorities and the dominant-group members who control the public schools has encouraged the minorities to perceive and define school learning as an instrument for replacing their cultural identity with the cultural identity of their "oppressors" without full reward or assimilation; and

> third, whether or not the relationship between the minorities and the schools generates the trust that encourages the minorities to accept school rules and practices that enhance academic success (p. 334).

Though Ogbu and his colleagues do not advocate changes in specific instructional strategies, their analysis suggests sources of conflict in students which prevent achievement. As Fordham and Ogbu (1986) have written, "one major reason black students do poorly in school is that they experience inordinate ambivalence and affective dissonance in regard to academic effort and success" (p. 177). This ambivalence is due in part to their fear that success carries the threat of a loss in racial identity. Thus, they argue that "the unique academic learning and performance problems created by the burden of acting white should be recognized and made a target of educational policies and remediation effort" (p. 203). Students must be given a route to achievement which does not imply losing their racial identity or assimilating into the white world.

Parent Involvement

It has become fashionable in the 1990s to say that "families and schools are partners in education." Beyond the belief that parent involvement spurs student achievement, what this "partnership" means is often vague. Certainly, the partnership between parents and schools is often not one of equals (Fine, 1991). Still, there has been a significant turnabout since a little more than a decade ago when Edmonds (1982) and others in the school effectiveness movement were adamant that parents had to be taken out of the school achievement equation. In an effort to make schools responsible for the success of *all* children, it seemed politically dangerous to allow schools to blame the achievement of low-income students on anything their parents did or did not do. What has happened to cause this change? And what kinds of parent involvement are being advocated today?

The increasingly fragmented and stressed family, particularly in urban areas, has both broadened the role of schools and spurred the development of programs to help parents become involved in their children's education (Flaxman & Inger, 1991). In fact, since increasing numbers of students live with aunts, siblings, grandparents, and other guardians, Fine (1991) has argued that schools should really talk about "family," rather than "parent," involvement. While family breakdown has prompted schools to take on such traditional parenting functions as sex and drug education, and arrangements for health examinations, the large number of young and poorly educated parents has also prompted schools to reach out with a variety of programs to help parents participate in their children's schooling, both at the school site and at home.

Currently, four strategies for parent involvement predominate in the national dialogue: 1) school choice by parents; 2) parent participation in the school management process; 3) parent training programs for those who want or are thought to need them; and 4) creation of family resource and support programs (Flaxman & Inger, 1991). Some of these strategies have already been referred to in other sections of this document.

Parents as Choosers. In the school choice section above, we treated some of the complexities of a parent involvement strategy focused on asking parents to choose their children's schools. By introducing a market mechanism, parent choice is said to make school bureaucracies more accountable. However, problems resulting from a low level of information about schools, the fact that parents often choose a school for convenience rather than for its academic reputation, and the general reluctance of poor families to "choose to choose" all make school choice a questionable strategy—at least when unaccompanied by a variety of parent support programs. Moreover, when students attend schools more distant from their neighborhood, it is more difficult to bring parents to the school site to involve them in other activities. Thus school choice may actually reduce

other areas of parent involvement. Finally, the hypothesis that when parents have the option of removing their children from a school, the school will be forced to be more "competitive" and, thus, deliver better and more responsive instruction has so far been unsustained (Carnegie Foundation, 1992).

Parents as Managers. As part of restructuring projects, parents and the community are also playing a larger role in both defining educational objectives and making the daily decisions of running a school. We have briefly discussed parent involvement in three restructuring projects: Accelerated Schools, Success for All, and the School Development Program. Both AS and the SDP include a school management role for parents. Parent involvement with a more direct management function is exemplified by the Local School Councils in Chicago, each of which is comprised of parents and community members, as well as the principal. Demonstrating how parent involvement can make changes to improve student achievement, the Chicago Local School Councils, in two of their initial decisions, reduced class size and cleared teachers' schedules of paperwork so that they could devote more time to teaching (Flaxman & Inger, 1991).

Parents as Learners. A wide range of packaged programs now exist which schools can use to develop parenting skills. They include PET, Parent Effectiveness Training, and STEP, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting. These programs help parents enhance their children's communication skills, such as active listening and conflict resolution. Other packaged programs help strengthen parents' desires to do whatever is best for their children. Family Matters, a program aimed at "hard-to-reach" parents, attempts to develop a strong rapport between parents and school staff, in part through home visits by staff, helping parents to help with homework, and helping parents to develop support networks (Flaxman & Inger, 1991).

Parent Support Programs. The fourth strategy for parent involvement is the provision of direct services to parents through home visiting services, job counseling and training, health clinics, substance abuse treatment, support and discussion groups, etc. Although there have been political controversies over whether this is an arena schools should enter, pressure to relieve the stress in children's homes has made this a growing area of intervention (Flaxman & Inger, 1991).

School-Community Relations

During the past decade, one of the most pervasive models for restructuring urban schools was the collaboration between schools and communities, involving not only parents, but also businesses, schools of higher education, health service providers, and other community organizations in the educational process. Like Head Start, this strategy is based on a recognition that successful education must be comprehensive; it must find ways to meet children's social- and health-related needs in addition to developing their cognitive skills. Because, as Dolan (1992) puts it, "schools are where the children are" (p. 1), many school-community collaborations have focussed on the delivery of human services within the schools, integrating programs which would otherwise be scattered throughout the community and, thus, underutilized. One of the most successful, although controversial, kinds of collaborations have been between schools and hospitals, which have provided school-based health and mental health clinics. The need for such comprehensive programs is clear; as Carr (cited in Carnegie Foundation, 1992) has pointed out, schools, even when they lack sufficient resources, "have been called upon to take over roles formerly played by the family, churches, and other agencies, ranging from sex education to housing and feeding children from dawn to dusk" (p. 77).

Many school-community collaborations have had success in bringing increased services to school children (Ascher, 1988). Still, a 1992 study of 42 school-community collaboratives by the League of Schools Reaching Out (Davies, Burch, & Johnson, 1992) found that while two-thirds of these schools, the largest number of which were at the elementary level, had established partnerships with a wide variety of community agencies, few of them had developed truly comprehensive programs to address the full range of community and family needs. Indeed, while some of these schools have systematically attempted to redefine their roles as service providers, traditional forms of "collaboration," such as the parent-teacher conference, remain the most wide-spread strategies for "reaching out" to students and their families.

Thus, much of the success of human-services collaboratives has been limited to the peripheries of the educational process. In addition, a 1987-88 survey by the National Center for Educational Statistics (cited in Clark, 1991) found that, in urban areas, 54 percent of collaboratives were with businesses, compared to only 17 percent with community service providers. While some of these school-business collaboratives have attempted to provide comprehensive services, most have emphasized short-term (though often valuable) activities, such as providing field trips and speakers, as well as some summer jobs.

Conclusion

The population of the United States is becoming ever more diverse. Despite persistent inequities that fall along racial lines, the country "continues to absorb a remarkable mixture of immigrants and even its failures imply ambitions that few other societies have ever entertained" (Ryan, 1992).

It is possible to come to a number of contradictory conclusions about the success of the nation's schools in educating diverse groups of students. Most educators would agree, however, that minority students, particularly those from low-income families, lag behind their generally more affluent white peers, and, equally important, that our average national achievement is not keeping pace with the shifting economy and changes in employment needs. That is, public schools are poorly serving the growing group that has traditionally been called disadvantaged students, a group which will provide the majority of our nation's future workers. But these schools are also underserving advantaged white students. This means that strategies to raise the achievement of one population of students alone—be it poor or middle-class students—no longer make sense.

The criticism of a remediation/compensatory approach, which leaves much of the student body untouched, then, takes on a new meaning. No longer is it sufficient just to close the gap between poor and minority students and their more advantaged, often white, peers. The remediation approach has never worked, and it has become increasingly suspect as the special needs models of education have been shown to be relatively ineffective in closing the gap between less privileged and privileged students. Instead, as educators increasingly argue, schools must be restructured, dramatically altered in their organization and delivery of services, for all students.

Unfortunately, it is easier to talk about the need for total change than to develop an ideal model of completely transformed schools. Thus, while some educators have imagined restructuring as students choosing their own school, others have envisioned new assessment practices, and still others picture new ways of teaching that successfully account for the diversity of today's students. In fact, heterogeneously grouped students, instruction which pays attention to learning styles, and a curriculum which

infuses culture and identity, all appear prominent in current discussions about the direction of urban schooling. Though the research in these areas is only beginning, there is much hope in the field that this restructuring of schooling–in all its facets–will offer an equal educational opportunity for the increasingly diverse students that attend American schools.

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